

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 00726 141848Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 CTME-00 MCE-00 PM-03 SP-02
IO-06 EB-04 L-01 PA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-10
AF-04 EUR-08 USIA-01 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00
NSC-05 /071 W
-----105374 150417Z /17

R 141344Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4919

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0726

LIMDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR CLYDE BRIANT, PM/MC

DEPT PASS GEORGE CORCORAN, ASST COMM OF CUSTOMS, INVESTIGATIONS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PCAT, PINR, AC, SF, US

SUBJ: PROPOSED CUSTOMS INVESTIGATION OF ARMS SHIPMENTS THROUGH
ANTIGUA

REF: A) ROBINSON-EDDY TELECON 3/9/78 B) BRIDGETOWN 0637
C) BRIDGETOWN 0625 D) BRIDGETOWN 0603

1. AFTER DISCUSSIONS MARCH 10 WITH SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE US
CUSTOMS ST. THOMAS, GORDON MONROE, EMBASSY AND MONROE AGREED
THAT ANY FURTHER INQUIRY BY HIM SHOULD BE PRECEDED BY
OFFICIAL IF INFORMAL PERMISSION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA.
EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT APPROVAL TO SCHEDULE VISIT BY
MONROE WITH GOA APPROVAL PREFERABLY THIS WEEK.

2. MONROE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS MARCH 10 THAT HE HAD SPOKEN
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BRIEFLY WITH ANTIGUA CONTROLLER OF CUSTOMS WILLIAM WEATHERED,
A PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE, DURING A MARCH 9 LAYOVER IN ANTIGUA.
WEATHERED ANSWERED MONROE'S GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
ALLEGATIONS OF ARMS SHIPMENTS THROUGH ANTIGUA BY SPACE
RESEARCH CORPORATION (SRC), BUT ACCORDING TO MONROE, THEN
SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE DIRECTION FROM THE
BIRD GOVERNMENT BEFORE GIVING MORE DETAILED INFORMATION.

3. WEATHERED GAVE MONROE A LIST OF SHIPS THAT WERE GOING TO OR FROM ANTIGUA WITH CARGO IN 1977. MONROE SAID HE HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST ONLY IN POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF US EXPORT REGULATIONS DEALING WITH MUNITIONS, ARMS OR AMMUNITION. INCLUDED ON THE SHIP LIST AND ACCORDING TO WEATHERED WAS THE SEIZURE BY GOA CUSTOMS IN MARCH 1977 OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM THE SHIP LADY SCOTIA WHICH WAS TRANSITING ANTIGUA FROM BERMUDA ON THE WAY TO BARRANQUILLA. WEATHERED TOLD MONROE THE CONFISCATED ARMS AND AMMUNITION WERE MARKED FOR SOUTH AFRICA, BUT THAT IN THE COURT CASE THAT FOLLOWED, THE GOA SEIZURE WAS RULED ILLEGAL SINCE THE GOODS IN QUESTION WERE IN TRANSIT. MONROE SAID IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT WEATHERED SAID HE FEARED FOR HIS POSITION SHOULD HE SAY TOO MUCH ABOUT SUCH A SENSITIVE MATTER WITHOUT GOA DIRECTION.

4. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE AND OF THE SUGGESTION BY MONROE THAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SECURE MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING COURT DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE 1977 SHIPMENT SEIZED, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT MONROE BE SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO ANTIGUA TO CONTINUE HIS INQUIRY IN AN OFFICIAL WAY. AS EXPLAINED TO THE EMBASSY, MONROE IS INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE VIOLATIONS OF USG EXPORT LAWS, SOMETHING THAT FALLS WITHIN THE NORMAL OPERATIONAL SPHERE OF CUSTOMS. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. MONROE ALSO MENTIONED CUSTOMS REGULAR LIAISON WITH THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. MIGHT BE USED TO SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON THE CANADIAN RESPONSE TO THE ARMS SHIPMENT CHARGES, WHICH FYI, CONTINUE TO RECEIVE COVERAGE IN THE LOCAL PRESS. PRESS OF MARCH 13, FOR EXAMPLE, CARRIES STORY IN WHICH THE BARBADOS WORKERS UNION EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER THE ANTIGUA WORKERS UNION CHARGES. IN OUR OPINION, THESE CHARGES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL PROVEN FALSE BY SRC, THE GOA OR OTHER PARTIES. ORTIZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS, ARMS SHIPMENTS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BRIDGE00726
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780114-0580
Format: TEL
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780373/aaaacjnu.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0df8f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 78 BRIDGETOWN 637
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3345790
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED CUSTOMS INVESTIGATION OF ARMS SHIPMENTS THROUGH ANTIGUA
TAGS: MASS, PCAT, PINR, AC, SF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0df8f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014